

REMARKS

Claim 35 has been amended and claim 37 cancelled without prejudice. No new matter has been added by virtue of those amendments. For instance, support for the amendments appears e.g. at pages 1-2 and the original claims of the application.

Claims 35-43 were newly rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 over Giesecke (U.S. Patent 4,568,570) or Matuzaki et al. (U.S. Patent 4,734,299) in combination with newly cited Daffer Jr. (U.S. Patent 4,035,500).

Applicants' independent claim 35 (the only pending independent claim) calls for use of a metal activator that is one or more agents chosen from silver (II), cobalt (III), ruthenium (V), (VI), (VII), (VIII), cerium (III) or (IV), iron (I) or (III), manganese (IV or higher), rhodium (IV) or vanadium (IV) or (V).

None of the cited documents disclose or otherwise suggest use of any of those agents as claimed by Applicants. Indeed, as discussed in Applicants' prior response, the entire thrust of both the primary citations of Giesecke and Matuzaki et al. is to use of silver (I). See, for instance, Matuzaki et al. at column 2, lines 11-15 and Giesecke at column 1, lines 52-61.

The addition of the newly cited Daffer Jr. document does not remedy such deficiencies of the primary citations. Daffer does not suggest use of the agents recited in Applicants' independent claim 35.

Additionally, Applicants' independent claim 35 includes steps (a) through (c), i.e.:

- (a) providing an aqueous solution comprising one or more metal activator species;

(b) contacting a part to be plated with the solution comprising one or more metal activator species, wherein the one or more metal activator species are oxidized to generate hydroxyl species;

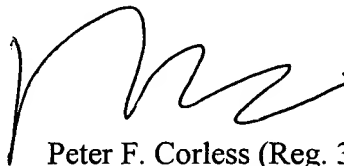
(c) etching the part with reactive hydroxyl species generated from water as a result of presence of the metal activator species in the aqueous solution;

The cited documents do not suggest those steps. Among other things, the cited documents do not suggest oxidizing one or more metal activator species to generate hydroxyl species as Applicants claim.

In view thereof, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are requested.

It is believed that the application is in condition for immediate allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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